



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## IDNR Sets Health and Safety Procedures for Deer Hunting at State Sites

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced changes to 2020-2021 deer hunting procedures at state sites. The changes, health and safety protocols implemented in response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, will provide greater protection to both the hunting public and site staff during the season.

Hunters should follow all public health guidelines issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health, including wearing masks when social distancing cannot be achieved and refraining from congregating in parking lot areas. Through responsible actions, hunters can help ensure that site hunting programs continue to offer Illinoisans healthy outdoor recreation opportunities.

The following changes in regulations will apply to IDNR sites participating in the deer hunting program:

1. **No standby deer hunting will occur on state sites for the 2020-2021 hunting seasons.** Deer hunting during the Firearm, Muzzleloading Rifle, CWD, and Late Winter Deer Seasons on state sites where special permits are issued through the regular statewide drawing will be limited to those persons already in possession of a site permit at the beginning of the season. In the past, standby drawings were held to fill unmet quotas or allow additional hunters to go afield once others had harvested deer. These drawings often resulted in crowded conditions at site offices.

Sites impacted include:

Argyle Lake State Park	Lowden-Miller State Forest
Big River State Forest	Mackinaw River State Fish and Wildlife Area
Castle Rock State Park	Marseilles Fish and Wildlife Area
Chain O'Lakes State Park	Marshall State Fish and Wildlife Area
Des Plaines State Fish and Wildlife Area	Mississippi Palisades State Park
Franklin Creek State Natural Area	Moraine Hills State Park
Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area/Heidecke State Fish and Wildlife Area	Morrison-Rockwood State Park
Green River State Wildlife Area	Rock Cut State Park
Horseshoe Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area (Alexander County)	Starved Rock State Park

Iroquois County State Conservation Area	White Pines Forest State Park
Jubilee College State Park	Wayne Fitzgerald State Recreation Area
Kaskaskia River Fish and Wildlife Area	

2. **Check-In, Check-Out, and Harvest Reporting procedures will be modified for the 2020-2021 hunting seasons to eliminate crowding and maintain social distancing.** On state sites where hunters are required to check in, check out, and report their deer harvest on-site, IDNR site staff will implement changes to keep IDNR employees and hunters safe. Modifications will include either: a) a drive-through check-in/check-out procedure in which hunters remain in their vehicle for the entire process or b) an unstaffed check station where hunters park and sign themselves in and out and report harvest. Upon arriving on-site, hunters should report to the normal check station and follow instructions as posted or as given by site staff. The 5:00 a.m. check-in time will be waived; hunters need only check in before going afield. *Note:* On many sites, self check-in and check-out procedures are already in place. On these sites, hunters will continue to follow the normal routine as posted.

Sites impacted include:

Anderson Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area	Marseilles Fish and Wildlife Area
Argyle Lake State Park	Marshall State Fish and Wildlife Area
Banner Marsh State Fish and Wildlife Area	Mazonia/Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Area
Big River State Forest	Miller-Anderson Woods State Natural Area
Buffalo Rock State Park/Blackball Mines Nature Preserve	Mitchell's Grove State Nature Preserve
Cache River State Natural Area	Moraine Hills State Park
Cape Bend State Fish and Wildlife Area	Morrison Rockwood State Park
Chain O'Lakes State Park	Mt. Vernon Propagation Center
Cypress Pond State Natural Area	Peabody River King State Fish and Wildlife Area
Deer Pond State Natural Area	Randolph County State Recreation Area
Des Plaines State Fish and Wildlife Area	Rend Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area
Dublin Highlands Pheasant Habitat Area	Rice Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area
Ferne Clyffe State Park	Sam Parr State Park
Fort de Chartres State Historic Site	Sandy Ford State Natural Area
George S. Park Memorial Woods State Natural Area	Sangchris Lake State Park
Giant City State Park	Silver Springs State Fish and Wildlife Area
Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area/Heidecke State Fish and Wildlife Area	Skinner Farm State Habitat Area
Horseshoe Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area (Alexander County)	Starved Rock State Park
Iroquois County State Wildlife Area	Trail of Tears State Forest
Jubilee College State Park	Turkey Bluffs State Fish and Wildlife Area
Kaskaskia River Fish and Wildlife Area	Union County State Fish and Wildlife Area
Kinkaid Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area	Washington County State Recreation Area

3. **The procedure for Special Hunts for Disabled Hunters will be modified for the 2020-2021 deer hunting seasons.** Interested hunters should contact the appropriate site office for more information regarding disabled hunt permit applications and deadlines. Disabled hunters must

possess a Class P2A disability card in order to be eligible for the drawing. Hunters are strongly encouraged to bring a non-hunting partner. Hunters selected for these opportunities will be contacted in advance of the hunt by IDNR site staff to arrange for payment of permit and selection of blind or hunting location, if applicable. For protection of the hunting public and IDNR staff, those hunters requesting transportation to/from their hunting location or assistance with removing harvested deer from the field will be required to undergo a COVID-19 screening and wear a face covering, unless they have a medical exemption. This screening will include answering a brief survey and submitting to a temperature check.

Sites impacted include:

Clinton Lake State Recreation Area	Spoon River State Forest
Horseshoe Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area (Alexander County)	Starved Rock State Park
Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area	Wayne Fitzgerald State Recreation Area
Jubilee College State Park	Wolf Creek State Park
Rock Cut State Park	

4. **There will be no in-person drawings/assignments for blind locations or hunting zones/areas.** On state sites where permitted hunters are assigned to a specific zone, area, or location within the site, site staff will select hunting locations for all hunters prior to the start of the hunting season and notify hunters of their assignment by mail or upon arrival at the check station. There will be no traditional zone or area selection gatherings, which could result in hunters gathering in large groups.

Sites impacted include:

Chain O'Lakes State Park	Newton Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area
Marshall State Fish and Wildlife Area	Starved Rock State Park
Moraine Hills State Park	

5. **Mandatory in-person, pre-season orientation meetings will be suspended for the 2020-2021 deer hunting seasons.** In lieu of these meetings, hunters may be provided with relevant site orientation or safety information before the beginning of the season by mail. Alternatively, sites may post, or provide hunters with, necessary orientation or safety information upon check-in on the first morning of the hunt.

Sites impacted include:

Castle Rock State Park	Moraine Hills State Park
Chain O'Lakes State Park	Newton Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area
Jubilee College State Park	Starved Rock State Park
Marshall State Fish and Wildlife Area	

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